

# THE WORKFORCE WORD

## Holiday Edition

### Events in December

#### Job Fairs

**Dec 6, 13, 20, 27**

**Dec 21 - 1st Annual  
Next Step Holiday Reunion**

**Dec 25 - Christmas Day**

**Dec 31 - New Years Eve**

It's the most Wonderful Time of the Year, especially at AWDA's One-Stop Center. Staff, clients, and customers are all filled with the Holiday Spirits of Joy, Love, and Peace. Office decorations and recent events subtly reflect the true seasonal sentiments of AWDA, fostering dedication to continued success and employment to promote local economic empowerment.

**SANTA Comes By The ONE-STOP!** Although many Gulf Coast residents have evacuated and moved since Hurricane Katrina, Santa Claus was still able to find and reward some of the area's children for their good behavior all year. On December 10, 2005, Santa Claus (AWDA's Blanchard Cooke) and his helpers, surprised displaced Gulf Coast children with stockpiles of toys, games, and clothing at AWDA's One-Stop Center. Santa met and spoke to the kids, assuring them that even in the aftermath of a disaster like Katrina, he wouldn't forget about them. The event facilitated by Patricia Hutchinson, was made possible by the individual efforts of one Michael Miller. Miller an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student at Jackson Memorial High School in Jackson, New Jersey was able to do more alone than many groups have done collectively. Mike or "Jersey Boy" as he likes to go by, first became aware of the loss and necessities of Gulf Coast residents after viewing a special on network television immediately following the disaster. "I wanted to help, I just didn't know how. On TV some of the kids were jumping rope, and then I realized that a lot of the kids probably didn't have any toys." After contacting various agencies and volunteer organizations, Mike was referred to the Atlanta Workforce Development Agency and Executive Director, Deborah Lum. He told her of his plan to collect and drive down donations from his community in New Jersey. Following their conversation, Ms. Lum welcomed and provided Mike with the agency's resources and personnel to assist in making the event special and memorable.



AWDA's LaSharn Harris assisting her adopted New Orleans family, the Martin's.

Besides his peers, classmates, and mother, Priscilla, Mike obtained insignificant private support and/or sponsors. With the little help Mike did receive, he managed to pass out flyers alerting neighbors and local communities of his concept. Soon, the donations began pouring in so much that Mike and Priscilla

had to rent a large moving truck just to transport the 3 months worth of contributions down to Atlanta. In addition to Mike's donations were extra gifts collected at last month's Katrina Benefit Concert the agency hosted in conjunction with designer Perry Ellis and Macy's Department Store at Lenox Mall.

When asked if all of his efforts were worth it? He replied that his inspiration and reward would always be the photos of the smiling faces of the kids he helped. Following graduation from high school, Mike plans to attend college and study Veterinary Sciences so that he can one day operate his own Zoo. The compassion and genuineness Mike and his New Jersey community of Jackson invokes the true meaning of this Holiday Season, and what it really means to give and remain a blessing unto



Mayor Franklin, Mike "Jersey Boy" Miller & former New Orleans residents smile with Santa!



Santa was able to sit, greet, and distribute gifts to more than 40 children during his visit to the One Stop Center.



## 1st Annual Next Step Holiday Reunion



Freshmen at Talladega University (Above)  
Tangie, Mayor Franklin, & Georgia Mic (Below)



The 1st Annual Holiday Reunion Celebration in honor of the 2005 Next Step Class remains yet another highlighted accomplishment for the pilot and unique class that kicked off this phenomenal program.

Beginning this past Summer, over 300 seniors from various Atlanta Public High Schools received resource assistance and financial aid for post secondary studies and careers. More than 100 students from 52 Schools attended the reunion, to meet and interact with Mayor Franklin, Next Step Staff, and their peers. The timing of the Celebration coincided with the official academic Winter Break for many of the students' undergraduate institutions. Next Step Staff Gabrielle Allmon & Carolyn Frisby facilitated the events, while Mayor Franklin and special guest speaker Civil Rights Activist JT Johnson delivered encouraging and inspirational messages to the audience. V-103 Radio Personality's Tangie & DJ Herb accompanied new Hip-Hop artist Georgia Mic in entertaining the excited bunch of students.



"Thelma & Louise," hold their Christmas gifts from AWDA Staff at the 1st Annual at the Next Step Holiday Reunion.

## We Wish You a Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year!

Dianne Burns & Mekia Goodbee composed their own AWDA version of the Holiday Classic 12 days of Christmas. (Lyrics Below)

*And the Winner for most festive Christmas Office Decorations is ...Charlotte Oliver! 2nd Place went to Office #206 of Latrice Hood, Pat Davis, and Sherron Reese. In a tie for 3rd Place were Linda Williford and Office #218 of Dewey McClain, Marcia Webb-Hayes, and Keith Gulley! Special Thanks to all of those who participated!*



### 12 Days of Christmas

**On the first day of Christmas AWDA gave to me a director-of-our-agency.**  
**On the second day of Christmas AWDA gave to me TWO databases.**  
**On the third day of Christmas AWDA gave to me THREE common measures.**  
**On the fourth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me FOUR working families.**  
**On the fifth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me FIVE career assessments.**  
**On the sixth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me SIX supportive services.**  
**On the seventh day of Christmas AWDA gave to me SEVEN staff-a-meeting.**  
**On the eighth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me EIGHT hours-of-working.**  
**On the ninth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me NINE Next Step seniors.**  
**On the tenth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me TEN training accounts.**  
**On the eleventh day of Christmas AWDA gave to me ELEVEN eager employers.**  
**On the twelfth day of Christmas AWDA gave to me TWELVE dislocated workers.**



Office #206 definitely garnered attention for one of the most decorative and Christmas-themed doors in the building.